

## Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10 CG-00

DOT-00 OIC-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 AID-05

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INR-07 L-03 NSF-01 NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-04 OES-06 SS-15

SP-02 INT-05 FEA-01 /128 W

-----010114 081811 /67

O R 010001Z MAR 77

FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2566

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 567

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UN, SENV, SF

SUBJECT: WATER CONFERENCE: SOUTH AFRICAN PARTICIPATION

REF: A) USUN 260 B) USUN 60 C) USUN 351

1. SUMMARY: PRESENT INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS MAY FIELD A FOUR MAN DELEGATION AT THE WORLD WATER CONFERENCE IN ARGENTINA--UNLESS THEY CAN BE CONVINCED OTHERWISE. OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THEY WOULD CONSIDER NON-ATTENDANCE IF THEY WERE APPROACHED AND PERSUADED THAT THEIR PRESENCE WOULD BE EMBARRASSING TO THEM AND POISONOUS TO THE CONFERENCE ATMOSPHERE. END SUMMARY.

2. RECENT DISCUSSIONS IN NEW YORK WITH A NUMBER OF DELEGATIONS AND UN SECRETARIAT PEOPLE STRONGLY INDICATE THEIR PRESENCE WOULD BE DISRUPTIVE. MOST RECENTLY AT A U.S.-HOSTED ECOSOC LUNCHEON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25TH, MINISTER COUNSELLOR KITCHEN WAS APPROACHED BY VARIOUS  
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DELS, INCLUDING THENIGERIANS, SUDAN, NETHERLANDS, GHANA, AND THE SOVIET UNION, ALL EXPRESSING CONCERN THAT THE PRESENCE OF SOUTH AFRICA WILL TURN THE CONFERENCE INTO A POLITICAL FREE-FOR-ALL. MANY OF THESE COUNTRIES ARE PLANNING TO BEEF UP THE POLITICAL SIDE OF THEIR DELEGATIONS IN ORDER TO COPE WITH THE EXPECTED PLETHORA OF POLITICAL ISSUES. WITH SOUTH

AFRICA PRESENT, AN ENHANCED PROBABILITY THAT THE ZIONISM-RACISM AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES ISSUES WILL BE DISCUSSED AND INCLUDED IN DOCUMENTS WHICH MAY EMERGE FROM THE CONFERENCE, AND THAT THE QUESTION OF SOUTH AFRICAN EXCLUSION WILL BE RAISED EARLY IN THE PROCEEDINGS. (OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH AS NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA, UK, SWEDEN HAVE ALL EXPRESSED SIMILAR CONCERNS ON OTHER OCCASIONS.) WHILE CERTAIN POLITICAL ISSUES (SUCH AS THE FARAKKA BARRAGE) WILL PROBABLY BE BEFORE THE CONFERENCE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, OTHER PRIMARILY BILATERAL ISSUES WILL BE MORE LIKELY TO SURFACE IN A MORE POLITICALLY CHARGED ATMOSPHERE. (SEE REFTEL B.) OBVIOUSLY THERE CAN BE NO CERTAINTY THAT THE ABOVE ISSUES WILL NOT APPEAR EVEN IF SOUTH AFRICA DOES NOT COME; HOWEVER, THE LIKEIHOOD IS LESS, AND THE DEGREE TO WHICH THESE ISSUES PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS WOULD PROBABLY BE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED.

3. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL FOR NAMIBIA (KAMARA OF ZAMBIA) PROBABLY WILL BE ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE (SEE REFTEL C), AND WOULD MAKE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE CONFERENCE AND SAG ATTENDANCE TO PRESS SOUTHWEST AFRICA MATTERS. (SWAPO MAY ALSO ATTEND.)

4. ACTION RECOMMENDED: USUN SUGGESTS THAT THE DEPARTMENT GIVE CONSIDERATION TO APPROACHING THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO INDICATE THAT WE HAVE HEARD FROM A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENTS EXPRESSING CONCERN, CONFIDENTIAL

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WHICH WE SHARE, THAT THE WATER CONFERENCE HAS A HIGH PROBABILITY OF DEGENERATING INTO A VERY POLITICALIZED CONFERENCE SHOULD THE SAG DECIDE TO MAKE IT ITS FIRST APPEARANCE AT A UN SPONSORED CONFERENCE IN SEVERAL YEARS. WE MIGHT NOTE TO THE SAG THAT WHILE THIS IS IN SOME DEGREE A 'TECHNICAL CONFERENCE' ITS MAIN PURPOSE IS TO GIVE VISIBILITY TO GLOBAL WATER RESOURCE PROBLEMS AND TO BRING POLICY MAKERS (NOT TECHNICIANS,) TOGETHER. THE CAST OF CHARACTERS WILL NOT BE PRODOMINANTLY TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS, AND THE CONFERENCE FOCUS WILL NOT BE ON RESOLVING TECHNICAL PROBLEMS. IN SUM, THE WATER CONFERENCE IS MORE AKIN TO THE HABITAT CONFERENCE IN DEALING IN GENERAL TERMS WITH A MAJOR WORLD PROBLEM, RATHER THAN AN IN-DEPTH DETAILED CONSIDERATION OF SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS AS IS THE CASE WITH THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE. MOREOVER, SAG SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD CONFERENCE WILL IN FACT PERMIT SAG PARTICIPATION I.E., GA ACT OF EXCLUSION WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE REPEATED.

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## Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009